

REMARKS

Claim 4 is currently pending in the application. Claims 1-3 and 5-26 are hereby canceled without prejudice. Claim 4 is amended. The amendments find support in the specification and are discussed in the relevant sections below. No new matter is added.

Applicants acknowledge the withdrawal of the 103 rejection of Claims 1-9 and Claim 24.

Rejections – 35 USC 112

The Office Action newly rejects Claims 1-3, 5-9 and 24 under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Though not acquiescing to the rejection, Applicant has cancelled Claims 1-3, 5-9 and 24, thereby making the rejection moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action states that Claim 4 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if written in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant has amended Claim 4 so that it is written in independent form, and so it includes all the limitations of base Claim 1. In view of this amendment, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

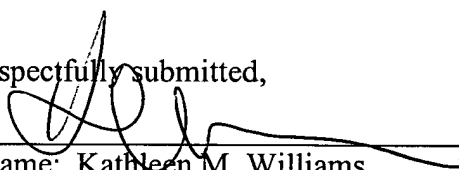
Conclusion

Applicant submits that all claims are allowable as written and respectfully request early favorable action by the Examiner. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicant's attorney/agent would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned attorney/agent of record.

Date:

2/2/04

Respectfully submitted,


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